

# R E Q U E S T

## of Armenian and Swiss Organizations in Switzerland

The Armenian Community of Neuchâtel-Jura  
The Armenian Ladies Association of Geneva, and  
The Switzerland - Armenia Association - SAA

addressed to:

**H.E. Mr. Robert Kocharian,**  
President of the Republic of Armenia

**H.E. Mr. Arthur Baghdassarian,**  
Speaker,  
The **National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia**

**H.E. Mr. Vartan Oskanian,**  
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia

Excellencies,

On January 20, 2004, the British Ambassador to Armenia, Mrs. Thorda Abbott-Watt, during a press conference marking the first anniversary of her diplomatic posting in Armenia, referring **to the events of 1915**, stated that although the British Government condemned the massacres as an atrocity at that time, **the evidence was not sufficiently unequivocal that what took place could be categorized as genocide under the 1948 United Nations Convention on Genocide** and that the debate on this issue continues among historians and lawyers.

**Whereas**, already fifteen States and Parliaments from around the world, a number of Regional Parliaments and Local Administrations, as well as very important International Organizations, such as the UN Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, the European Parliament, and the World Council of Churches, officially and unequivocally recognized the Armenian Genocide;

**Whereas**, this is the second time — a similar denialist statement was made in 2002 by Mrs. Rivka Cohen, Israel's Ambassador to Armenia — that a foreign diplomat casts doubt on the veracity of the Armenian Genocide;

**Whereas**, on both occasions, the Armenian Government either showed no reaction at all or reacted very mildly to the highly offensive statements made by both diplomats against the remembrance of the Armenian Holocaust, a recognized fact under international norms;

**Whereas**, such statements made within the Armenian State, and remaining without a proper response, are directly affecting the sovereignty of the Armenian Nation and weakening the efforts of the Armenian Diaspora towards the international affirmation of the Armenian Genocide;

**Whereas**, the silence and apathy of the Armenian Government towards these unacceptable and offensive attacks against the Armenian Nation and State is causing political damage to both Armenia and the Diaspora, impairing their struggle in defense of the rights of the Armenian Nation, violated by the execution of the Armenian Genocide;

**Whereas**, the inaction of the Armenian State is undermining the moral standing of the Republic of Armenia in trying to preserve the rights of the Karabagh people vis-a-vis Azerbaijan, as the massacres of the Armenians in Sumgait (1988), Kirovabad (1989) and Baku (1990) are losing their significance since they are not properly documented and condemned, and those responsible still remain unpunished; and

**Whereas**, such statements, if not sanctioned, would reinforce the Turkish Government's on-going denialist policies vis-a-vis the Armenian Genocide, such as the directive issued last year by the Turkish National Education Ministry compelling students of all Primary and Secondary schools in Turkey to deny the Armenian, Assyrian and Pontus Greek exterminations in the early 20th Century, which constitutes a flagrant violation of many international agreements, mainly Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and Article 29 of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child.

**The above-mentioned organizations demand that:**

- **The Armenian Parliament and Government adopt all necessary legislative and diplomatic measures to prevent, in the future, others from making such offensive statements against the memory of the Armenian Nation;**
- **The British Ambassador in Armenia, Mrs. Thorda Abbott-Watt, apologize publicly for her statement and officially retract them; if she refuses, the Ambassador should be declared *persona non grata* in the Republic of Armenia.**

Neuchâtel/Geneva/ Bern, March 15, 2004

**Kalust Zorik**

Vice President of the Armenian Community of Neuchâtel-Jura

**Anahid Hagopian-Godel**

President of the Armenian Ladies Association of Geneva

**Sarkis Shahinian**

Co-Chairman of the Switzerland - Armenia Association - SAA